

EXHIBIT A

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION TO IMMUNIZATION FORM
PARENT/GUARDIAN STATEMENT

Name of Student _____

Identification Number _____

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

School District and Building Name Minnesotke, TVESD

This form is for your use in applying for a religious exemption to Public Health Law immunization requirements for your child. Its purpose is to establish the religious basis for your request since the State permits exemptions on the basis of a sincere religious belief. Philosophical, political, scientific, or sociological objections to immunization do not justify an exemption under Department of Health regulation 10 NYCRR, Section 66-1.3 (d), which requires the submission of:

A written and signed statement from the parent, parents, or guardian of such child, stating that the parent, parents or guardian objects to their child's immunization due to sincere and genuine religious beliefs which prohibit the immunization of their child in which case the principal or person in charge may require supporting documents.

In the area provided below, please write your statement. The statement **must** address **all** of the following elements:

- Explain in your own words why you are requesting this religious exemption.
- Describe the religious principles that guide your objection to immunization.
- Indicate whether you are opposed to all immunizations, and if not, the religious basis that prohibits particular immunizations.

You may attach to this form additional written pages or other supporting materials if you so choose. Examples of such materials are listed on page 3.

* SEE Attached letter for statement
asserting need for religious exemption to
public health law immunization requirements.

SECTION BELOW FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT USE ONLY

To the Building Principal:

If, after review of the parental statement, questions remain about the existence of a sincerely held religious belief, Department of Health regulation [10 NYCRR, Section 66-1.3(d)] permits the principal to request supporting documents. Some examples include:

- A letter from an authorized representative of the church, temple, religious institution, etc. attended by the parent/guardian, literature from the church, temple, religious institution, etc. explaining doctrine/beliefs that prohibit immunization (Note: Parents/guardians need not necessarily be a member of an organized religion or religious institution to obtain a religious exemption);
- Other writings or sources upon which the parent/guardian relied in formulating religious beliefs that prohibit immunization;
- A copy of any parental/guardian statements to healthcare providers or school district officials in a district of prior residence explaining the religious basis for refusing immunization;
- Any documents or other information the parent/guardian may be willing to provide that reflect a sincerely held religious objection to immunization (for example: disclosure of whether parent/guardian or other children have been immunized, parent/guardian's current position on allowing himself or herself or his or her children to receive or refuse other kinds of medical treatment.)

Reviewer Name (Building Principal) _____

Indicate Result of Request Review:

APPROVED ☒

Date of Approval _____

SEP 27 2016

DENIED ☐

Date of Denial _____

State Specifically Reason(s) for Denial:

Request for Religious Exemption to Immunization Form--Parent/Guardian Statement (continued)

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Please sign in the space provided below and have the document notarized by a notary public where indicated.

I hereby affirm the truthfulness of the forgoing statement and have received and reviewed the informational immunization materials provided to me by my child's school.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date _____

Sworn to before me this 27th

day of September

Notary Public Seal

SHANNON M GLUECKERT
Notary Public - State of New York
NO. 01GL6158117
Qualified in Suffolk County
My Commission Expires Dec 18, 2018

You will be notified in writing of the outcome of this request. Please note that if your request for an exemption is denied, you may appeal the denial to the Commissioner of Education within thirty (30) days of the decision, pursuant to Education Law, Section 310.

[REDACTED]

September 26, 2016

Kristin Tillona Baker
The Knox School
541 Long Beach Road
St. James, NY 11780

Brian Biscari, Principal
Minnesauke Elementary School
21 High Gate Drive
East Setauket, NY 11733

Dear Principals Baker and Biscari,

I'm grateful that I had been given sufficient time to draft this affidavit statement. It had taken me some weeks to complete it, and I hope it provides you with insight into who I am as a person, a mother and a Jew.

That of course, is the reason for this correspondence. To apply for, and G-d willing, have my religious exemption granted for my son [REDACTED] now in 11th grade, and my daughter [REDACTED] who's in 6th grade

That's because I had come to realize, very belatedly, that the medical practice of vaccination contradicts central precepts in Judaic law. Belatedly, I say, because by that point in time—October 2012—both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were fully vaccinated for their age group. Writing this statement is something I'd imagined I'd be doing since 2012, but there wasn't any pressure to do so because neither of them were lacking any shots. But now, [REDACTED] (i.e. her last DTaP booster)

While I mention both of them, this statement really comes down to *my* religious beliefs, inasmuch as exemption status, when granted, is conferred upon parents for *their* beliefs—not their children's. For that reason, it seemed most practical to present my beliefs in this all-inclusive document on behalf of each of them, regardless of grade level of vaccine status.

That is why I pray that you will understand my concerns about vaccination—which are solely based upon my interpretations of Mosaic Law and the Torah, and whose commandments I was raised to follow—is so antithetical to Judaism that it had *forced* me to make the fateful decision to discontinue all vaccinations, thanks to that pivotal discussion I had with [REDACTED] my son's tutor, in 2012.

It has indeed been the Torah and Jewish faith traditions and values that has been a guiding force in my life, and ultimately, behind my decision to refrain from all vaccinations. I assume that most Rabbis and Rabbinical scholars, and most Jews today, accept vaccination. But it is well within the Talmudic tradition for any Jew to question

generally accepted secular practices in society in the context of Jewish law and tradition.

And that is precisely the reason for this statement—to explain *my* understanding of the Bible and Jewish law and tradition, and how *I* came to this understanding with respect to specific aspects of vaccination—two of which I will identify later in this statement.

My Life Experience as a Jew

That understanding, and influence on my life, had begun a very long time ago for me. I'm a practicing Jew, raised by two Jewish parents. My parents were not deeply religious people, but throughout my life they have instilled in me a deep cultural Jewish identity. During my childhood, my family would observe Jewish holidays and I would attend temple with my mother.

From a young age, I was curious about the tenets of Judaism. Despite the fact that my mother was not an extremely observant person, her grandfather was a rabbi and she could easily answer my questions and satisfy my queries. As I grew, I asked to go to Hebrew school and my parents obliged. I was an active teen member of my synagogue, Temple Beth Shalom in Smithtown, participating in youth groups and Friday night services.

Upon request, my parents sent me to Jewish summer camps and I was a member of a national Jewish sorority in college. I was always seeking a deeper understanding of Jewish law. In college I took several Jewish studies classes and continued my observation of the Jewish faith into adulthood. I married a Jewish man and we have raised our children in a culturally rich Jewish environment.

My sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] attended Jewish nursery schools and Hebrew school. They became Bar Mitzvahs upon their 13th birthdays and my daughter, [REDACTED] is currently studying at the Chabad Hebrew School. I am very close with [REDACTED] one of the Rabitzens at the Chabad. I often make challah with her and we meet for inspirational talks. She has become a spiritual beacon who has helped reunite me with my belief in G-d.

You see, 2010 was a particularly trying year for my family. My son, [REDACTED] literally woke up one day a different kid. He started manifesting psychological symptoms of generalized anxiety, OCD and rages. We didn't know what was happening, but we knew something was wrong. It was very stressful throughout the summer and into the fall. We just couldn't get answers.

Then, in October of that year, my parents visited Israel on a "once in a lifetime" tour. A few days after they left, we received a phone call from my mother telling us my father was in the hospital with a virus that triggered pneumonia. Within 3 days he was on a ventilator and shortly thereafter on life support. My sisters and I travelled to Israel to support my mother. We arranged to have my father medi-vacked back to NY where he

died a few days later. Needless to say, I was devastated. How could my G-d let this happen in the Holy Land? How could G-d let this happen to my life? My father was gone, my child was sick and I was distraught.

I believed in G-d my whole life. Historically throughout time, in the most challenging of times the Jewish people always turned to G-d in prayer and put their faith and trust in G-d. In Psalms 31:1, *"In you, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in your righteousness."* However, for me, the tragedies that were being bestowed upon my family were too much. I began to vera away from my religious beliefs and for a period of time questioned my faith in G-d.

I spoke with a Rabbi who explained that grappling with issues of G-d and faith is central to Judaism. It is an expected, encouraged experience. The very essence of the Talmud is the questioning of the relevance and application of scripture to our lives with a strong faith and trust in G-d. He suggested I take a step back, grieve, and question. I took his advice. I continued my cultural observance, but took a step back and started questioning where G-d fit into my life. It wasn't until it was time for my son, [REDACTED] Bar Mitzvah preparation that I began to find my way back.

Turnabout on Vaccination

I mentioned there was a turning point in my understanding of vaccines and vaccination.

It was 2012 and [REDACTED] was still struggling. We were getting him the best psychological help available, but things still had not returned to baseline. We needed to prep him for his Bar Mitzvah, so we hired a tutor. The tutor's name was [REDACTED]. She was an amazing Jewish educator who understood my need to reconcile what happened to my son and my father and my faith.

We talked about how one of the special things about Judaism is that introspection, questioning, and continuous learning is celebrated in the Torah, as well as the Talmud. Searching and skepticism is often what brings us to a deeper level of understanding and thus enable us to worship more devoutly. [REDACTED] helped me answer some hard questions, restore my faith in G-d, and become a more impassioned believer. She also was the catalyst to my questioning vaccines.

[REDACTED] and I had many discussions relating to Jewish doctrine and secular laws. One day in October, 2012, she and I were talking about vaccines and the reasons Jewish parents choose not to vaccinate. Up to that time my children were fully vaccinated, but I was starting to question how vaccines fit in to Jewish practice. After this discussion, I decided to do my own research and ultimately decided to stop vaccinating my children.

Meanwhile, after his Bar Mitzvah, [REDACTED] continued to struggle. We kept digging for answers both medically and spiritually. Finally in 2014/2015, [REDACTED] was diagnosed with Neurological Lyme disease and PANS. This illness is what was triggering the

- autoimmune encephalitis that was causing his psychological issues! Nearly two years into treatment he is recovering well and continues to improve every day.

In 2015, [REDACTED] was also evaluated and found to have a similar immune condition to [REDACTED] though her immune system was much stronger and she was not manifesting the same symptoms as of yet. Their doctor advised against vaccinations for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] due to their immune conditions. However, this is not the reason for my withholding vaccines at this time. The decision had been made several years earlier.

- The past 6 years has been very difficult for our family, particularly the past 2, when medical conditions presented daily challenges. Fortunately, about 3 years ago we joined a new congregation, Stony Brook Chabad. I quickly forged a close friendship with [REDACTED], a Rabitzten in the Chabad. My relationship with [REDACTED] is fulfilling on a spiritual and philosophical level. She provides great support and understanding relating to the medical issues my children deal with and helps me reconcile how G-d will help me through my personal suffering. She inspires me to accept G-d and seek his strength and guidance through challenging times.

I wrote earlier that there are two salient reasons I discontinued vaccinations.

“For I Am G-d Who Heals You”

Vaccines are a currently controversial for many reasons. The state mandated vaccine schedule is abundant and issues surrounding their safety has come to the forefront. Living in the Three Village Community, this issue is impossible to ignore. Many of our neighbors have children with special needs. When your children are suffering, people begin to question and discuss plausible reasons for their children’s medical and behavioral sufferings. It would be impossible to live here and not to speak with parents on their opinions about vaccinations.

I’m somewhat familiar with issues concerning alleged vaccine injury, the supposed links between vaccines and autism. They never won me over, but then I never paid that much study to them in the first place. However, while I understand and respect the medical concerns of some parents, my concerns about vaccinations run deeper and along a more spiritual plane. My concerns arose, as I stated, following my meeting with Surry, and they stem from an overarching *theological* belief that vaccinations are wrong for my children.

One deep rooted belief is that one’s health and well-being are given to us by G-d and mankind should not tamper with the health that is given us. Essentially our bodies are “on loan” from G-d and therefore, according to Maimonides, we must avoid anything that may harm the body. The Torah tells us that our health and happiness is equal to our faith in G-d and His commandments. A daily blessing reads, *“Blessed are you our G-d who heals all flesh and acts wondrously.”* We see from here that we must trust in G-d to keep us healthy.

G-d is the only one that can prevent sickness. *"You shall worship G-d, your G-d, and He shall bless your bread and your water, and I shall remove illness from your midst."* (Exodus 23:25) The Torah tells us: *"All the diseases which I afflicted on Egypt I will not afflict upon you for I am G-d who heals you."* (Exodus 15:26) I interpret this to mean that G-d, is my healer and all my faith must be placed in him. If I live my life according to G-d's commandments, health will be bestowed upon my family.

Medically interfering and injecting my children with a vaccine forces the abandonment of my covenant with G-d and belies commitment to his teachings. Vaccinating my children would be putting faith in the vaccine rather than in G-d and His power. This is supported in the following verse; *"I am the Lord thy G-d, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."* (Exodus 20:2)

Vaccination is a form of idolatry and diminishes the faith I have in G-d's wisdom and perfect creation of humankind. Vaccinations portray an idolatrous obsession of fear of illness which reveals a lack of faith that G-d is the creator of life and healer of mankind. This does not ring true for me. There is but one G-d.

From that vaunted platform, vaccines are often flaunted as saviors, as modern day miracles, and our society invests enormous amounts of faith in them. From my perspective, this modern "faith" in vaccines has replaced faith in G-d, and has thus become a false idol. The Torah teaches us to not listen to false prophets: *"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your G-d is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and all your soul."* (Deuteronomy 13:1-10).

Thus, I came to realize that the practice of vaccination undermines faith itself, far more than any other secular undertaking. There is nothing wrong with modern medicine per se. But as a Jew, I see vaccination specifically as the overreaching exception, to alter our blood with prohibited material (see later section), and with the hauteur of supposedly saving the human race. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And rely not on your own wisdom. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths. Be wise not in your own eyes; revere the Lord and depart from evil. It shall be healing to your flesh, and marrow to your bones."* (Proverbs 3:5-8)

Mandated vaccines for the purposes of keeping our children safe and healthy implies that G-d somehow made us imperfect and now we need vaccine to correct that mistake. We are told that human beings are now the new Creator apprentices who understand how to eradicate disease. Thus, accepting vaccinations would amount to an idolatrous obsession based in fear of illness and would, therefore, show a lack of belief and trust in G-d, violating a very basic tenet of Judaism.

Vaccines are made of bio-organic and attenuated infectious disease agents that are injected directly into a person's bloodstream. I support the Torah teachings that *"You are to sanctify yourselves and you shall become holy for I am holy. You shall not make your souls impure."* (Leviticus 22:45) However, while it is my duty to reject these impurities and keep the soul pure, this in no way negates the use of medicine to comfort or treat those who are ill or injured. Jews are commanded to do that.

We are taught that salvation from disease and pestilence comes from faith- not by the facile act of rolling up one's sleeve. *"If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, give ear to His Commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you."* (Exodus 15:26)

It is a given that vaccinations are not designed to treat those who are ill or injured. Rather, they are medical inventions/creations that promise to eradicate disease itself. This is very different from the less ambitious conventional medicine used to alleviate pain or calm a fever or inflammation. *"Those who have the capacity to eliminate a wrong and do not do so bear the responsibility for its consequences."* (Shabbat 54b)

"No Person Among You Shall Eat Blood"

After issues regarding vaccination were raised, I started to research. The CDC website as well as some of the vaccine companies' websites published information, sometimes in the form of vaccine package inserts, that listed the ingredients used to make the vaccine. I was surprised to see what was used to create the vaccines. Vaccines undisputedly contain viruses, fluids, cells, bacteria, human diploid cells and animal material, including, but not limited to, blood products.

I confirmed it by finding this table by the CDC
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/appendices/B/excipient-table-2.pdf> You can see there are materials from different species, including monkeys, chickens, cows, and pigs (pork gelatin). I also found something online called, "Are Blood Cells in Vaccines". I printed it for you as a guide. It's all really blood, since organs are essentially solidified blood.

And the NYSED Commissioner also seemed convinced they reside in vaccines, when he rendered a decision in favor of one parent who made that allegation: Appeal of N.C. vs. New York City Department of Education (Decision No. 16,805, August 3, 2015)
<http://www.counsel.nysed.gov/Decisions/volume55/d16805>

If vaccines were made up of chemicals already found in the human blood like vitamins, sugars, antibiotics, etc., then that would not be in conflict with Jewish law. Jews are forbidden to consume blood as it is considered to be inseparable from spirit. It is also not to be taken as nourishment. Torah instructs that the sanctity of blood *"Only be sure that thou eat not the blood; for blood in life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh"* (Deuteronomy 12:23).

I believe that because vaccines are derived from these impure compounds, the *mixing* of vaccines and human blood is an issue in violation of G-d's teachings. Our blood is the essence of our being. There is no life without blood. Thus, it is essential that our blood stays holy and pure. Clearly vaccinating my kids any further would defile their blood. It would defile their spirit. How can it "be good" for us to do something that was forbidden? It can't!

Looking further, Torah also forbids us from consuming the blood of another animal or person (Leviticus 17:10-12; Leviticus 7:26-27; Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:23-25). The Torah tells us that the embodiment of our souls is found in our blood (Leviticus 17:11; and the previously cited Deuteronomy 12:23). A key concept in Judaism is "*b'tzelem elohim*", meaning that we are created in the image of G-d and that, by extension, to defile our body is to defile G-d. Therein is the conflict. Because blood was not to be mixed. It must remain pure. This is done by not mixing it with other blood, and also not making our blood unclean.

Not only does the bible warn us about placing these ancient poisons inside us, but *our own* sacred blood is defiled when the proteins and biological cellular components making up vaccines inevitably decompose in our bloodstreams. Vaccines are made from humoral fluids of all kinds—proteins prone to decay in the absence of digestive enzymes not found in the blood. Simply, the vaccine antigens are grown in blood cells. They are cultivated with many diseased animal cells from chicken embryos, canine and monkey kidney tissue, pig or horse blood, calf bovine serum and many other cocktails from different species as well as material from animal and human blood. These substances then enter the blood stream and are an obstruction to the purity of our should and life.

But the key issue is that blood of *any* creature, must not be consumed, so it stands to reason that it may certainly not be injected directly into our bodies. Doing so is a joining of the unclean upon the clean sanctified blood. There are no greater restrictions on unholy mixing then there are for blood. "*You shall not eat anything with the blood: Neither shall you use enchantment, nor observe times*" (Leviticus 19:26) This law is so serious that even gentiles (non-Jews) were not allowed to eat the blood. "*Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.*" (Leviticus 17:12) Additionally, no animals qualified as an exception to the law: "*Moreover you shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be foul or of beast, in any of your dwellings.*" (Leviticus 7:26)

We have limited time on this earth. If our bodies and souls are given in pureness and sanctity, if we enrich our bodies through nourishment, including healthy lifestyles and spiritual devotion, our soles will return in pureness and sanctity; "*...you shall sanctify yourselves and you will be holy, for I am holy; and you shall not contaminate your souls through any teeming thing that creeps on the earth.*" (Leviticus 11:44) This means that any contaminated substance that vaccines possesses are forbidden and violates the Judaic law since "*The life of flesh is in the blood*" (Leviticus 17:11). It is a sin to

introduce foreign blood products and antigenic cellular material into an otherwise healthy body. It violates the basic precepts of Judaism.

Along the same lines is the issue of vaccinations and DNA. Based upon my research, I believe that there are materials in some vaccinations that may cause DNA modifications, (i.e. gene mutations in people). This is but another defiling of our bodies. Injection of such substances violates G-d's Law that clearly prohibits genetic engineering or use of its products. *"Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee."* (Leviticus 19:19) Injecting my children with a vaccine that contains DNA altering chemicals is against my beliefs. It alters who they are at their core and can change their lives forever.

There is contemporary Jewish writings to support these spiritual postulates of the Torah equating spiritual well-being to that of the physical: *"You may not in any way weaken your health or shorten your life. Only if the body is healthy is it an efficient instrument for the spirit's activity....Therefore you should avoid everything which might possibly injure your health.... And the law asks you to be even more circumspect in avoiding danger to life and limb than in the avoidance of other transgressions."* (Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb, Chapter 62, Section 428)

For me, purity of blood is a embodiment of holiness. Vaccinating my children would be asking me to contaminate their blood and therefore injure themselves. Although the possibilities of adverse reactions of blood contaminations are unknown, I must abstain from harming the body and trust in G-d who created man in His perfect wisdom. "The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up." (Samuel 2:6)

To close, thank you for taking the time to read and consider my request for religious exemption from vaccination. I realize that the desire to refrain from vaccination is out of the norm. However, it is my faith that prompts me to keep my children free of future mandated vaccinations and I cannot concede. I hope I have successfully conveyed that vaccination violates my sincere and heartfelt religious beliefs. I request that you kindly forward your written acknowledgment confirming acceptance of my religious exemption, as soon as possible. I would also ask that you keep my children's unvaccinated status privileged and confidential.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Sworn to before me this
27th day of September, 2016
x *Charmay Melnick*

